Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIII, Issue No. 352 | **THURSDAY** DECEMBER 18, 2003 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

INSIDE

Around the CNMI

urban outlet
+ORANGE

Island Snapshots

The Saipan Tribune accepts contributed pictures of birthdays, weddings, baptisms, and other community and family events for free publication. Material submitted should be original and not copyrighted, in digital or print format. Must include a caption containing complete details (a description of the event, identities of the persons in the picture, the date, and the place), the name of the contributor, and a contact number. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to edit the caption, the date of publication and the size of the picture. Contributors can e-mail their submissions to editor.tribune@gtepacifica.net. To check if contributions are received, call 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747.

cars

mcdo

WEATHER FORECAST

PICTURE TIME: 2:25 A.M., DECEMBER 17, 2003
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A monsoon trough extends from 6N130E through a tropical disturbance near 8N145E and finally to near 5N160E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the disturbance are found in the Mariana islands as well as between Yap and Chuuk or between 4N and 16N from 139E to 153E. Just east of the monsoon trough, a surface trough of low pressure continues to near the equator at 168E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are developing north and east of the trough or within 100 miles either side of a line from 9N160E to the equator at 173E, including Kosrae. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms across portions of the Marshall islands, between 4N and 16N from 170E to 180.

SAIPAN AND TINIAN
Cloudy and breezy with scattered showers, some locally heavy, and a slight chance of thunderstorms.
Winds: East at 20-25 mph. Gusting in 35 mph in showers.
Temperature: Lows near 78. Highs near 86.

GUAM AND ROTA
Cloudy and breezy with scattered showers, some locally heavy, and a slight chance of thunderstorms.
Winds: East at 20-25 mph. Gusting in 35 mph in showers.
Temperature: Lows near 78. Highs near 86.

PALAU
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 10 kt.

POHNPEI
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East at 10 kt.

YAP AND ULITHI
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 10 kt.

KOSRAE
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Southeast at 10 kt.

CHUUK
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers with a slight chance of thunderstorms.
Winds: Northeast at 10-15 kt.

MAJURO
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.
Winds: East at 10-15 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
Auckland	Cloudy	61F (16C)	49F (9C)
Beijing	Sunny	44F (7C)	26F (-3C)
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	74F (23C)	61F (16C)
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	86F (30C)	72F (22C)
London, England	Cloudy	56F (13C)	45F (7C)
Los Angeles	Cloudy	69F (21C)	51F (11C)
Manila	Cloudy	88F (31C)	71F (22C)
Melbourne	Sunny	73F (23C)	54F (12C)
Miami	Partly Cloudy	84F (29C)	75F (24C)
New York, NY	Cloudy	52F (11C)	48F (9C)
Osaka	Rain	54F (12C)	46F (8C)
Paris	Cloudy	53F (12C)	41F (5C)
Pusan	Rain	58F (14C)	43F (6C)
Rome	Partly Cloudy	55F (13C)	39F (4C)
Salem, Oregon	Rain	54F (12C)	38F (3C)
San Francisco	Sunny	64F (18C)	47F (5C)
Seoul	Rain	52F (11C)	45F (7C)
Tokyo	Rain	55F (13C)	49F (9C)
Washington, DC	Cloudy	60F (16C)	48F (9C)

tribune

Opinion

Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XIV, Issue No. 151

Published daily at 2/F Century Insurance Building,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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EDITORIAL

Los Angeles Times



By RUTH L. TIGHE

Letters to the Editor

Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Our World At War

Island Snapshots



JOHN RAVELO

Gov. Juan N. Babauta receives a check worth $25,000 from Joseph Hartman, president of SotfSky, which is the company that mints commemorative coins that uses the CNMI's names and seal. The check payment represents royalties made from the sale of the coins.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of the Youth Center of Music and the Performing Arts busy themselves cleaning cars, including these two police squad vehicles during Shell's "Suds for Funds" event held last July 24 at the Shell Puerto Rico station. The kids raised over $400 to be used for YCMPA's various activities.



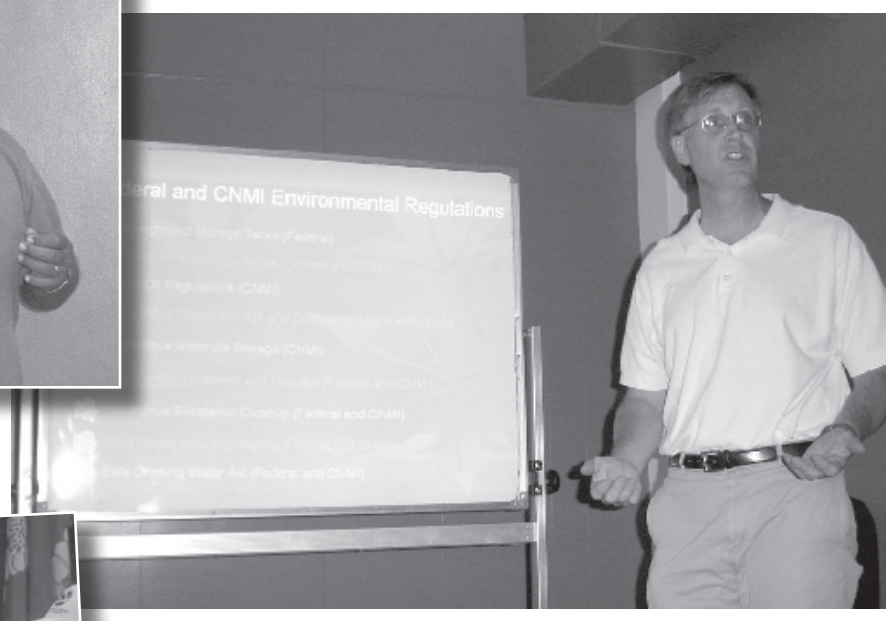
CASSIE DLG FEJERAN

High Priest Kansho Kayaki leads SANPOEN cultural exchange students and Mayor Juan B. Tudela in prayer prior to releasing the lanterns unto the water.



TRIBUTED PHOTO

Patrick Guerrero of the CNMI Water Task Forces stresses a point. CO



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

David Hodges of the CNMI Division of Environmental Quality uses a projector to point out Federal and CNM regulations.



A member of the International Students Association of Japan Cultural Exchange Program tries out the Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente's chair at the Governor's Office Tuesday.

SHAN SEMAN



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI canoe crew make landfall in Palau where they will participate in the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture.

Four of the eight Liberation Queens—Lady Myla Grace Capilitan, Lady Sheyvonne Judy Aldan, Leiana K. Ogumoro, and Lady Sarah T. Igisaiar—take a minute to smile for the camera just before their dance performance during Street Market Thursday night.

CASSIE DLG FEJERAN



JET HOLDING

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ACROSS THE NATION

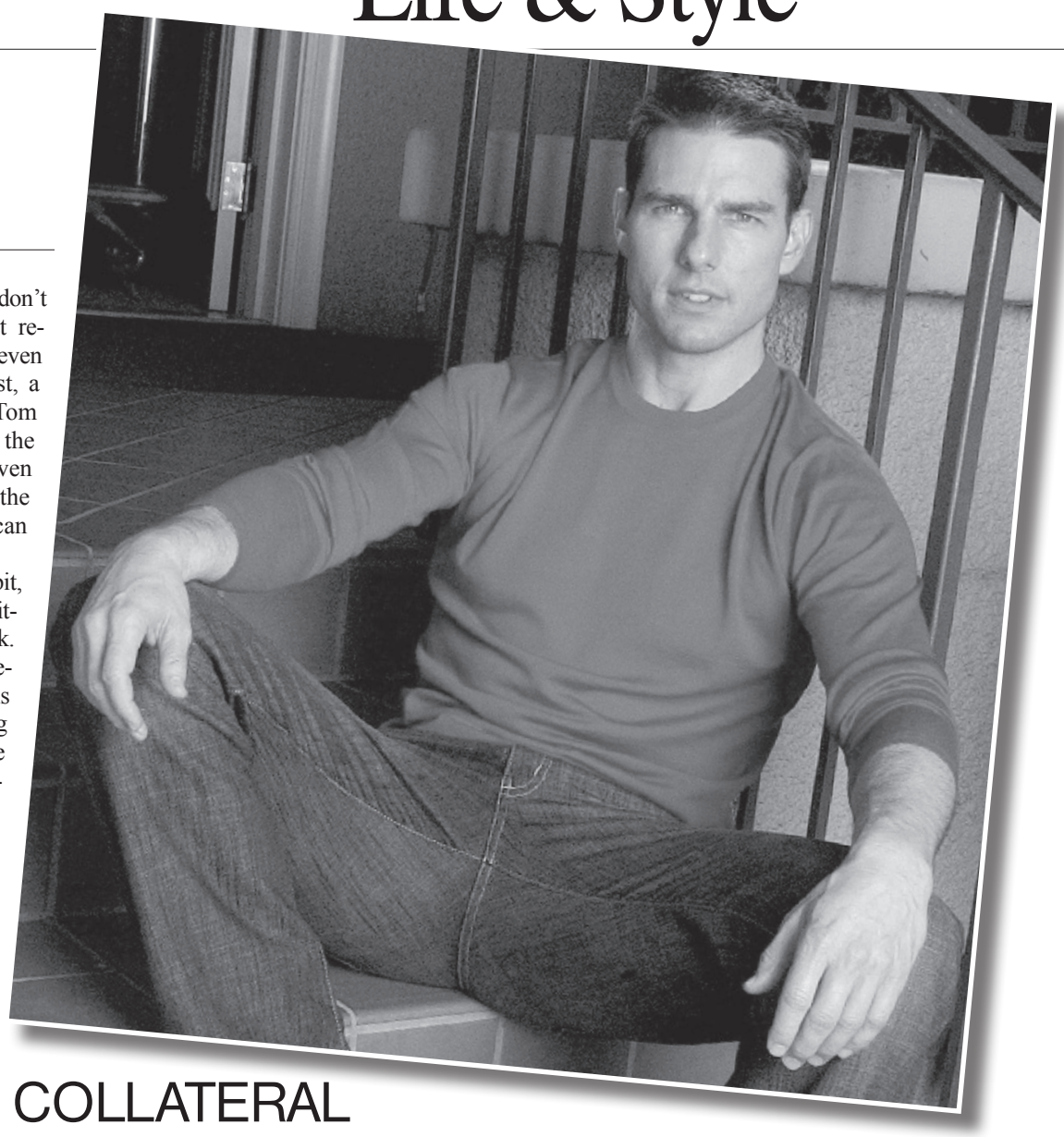
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Life & Style

Life & Style



Actor Tom Cruise poses for a portrait at the Beverly Hills Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif., July 29, 2004. AP

MOVIE REVIEW: COLLATERAL

More plot-holes than the back road to Kagman has potholes

By JOE WEINDL
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

If you're on your way to see *Collateral*, don't bother bringing your brain with you—it really won't be necessary. In fact, it might even stop you from enjoying what is, at least, a decent action flick. The premise of Tom Cruise's latest thriller is a novel idea, but the intricate details of the plot are barely even half-baked. If you're able to look past the Swiss-cheese plot, though, Collateral can be a fun movie to watch.

Tom Cruise steps out of his box a little bit, to play the "bad guy," Vince, a hitman visiting L.A., for a night, to do his dirty work. Jamie Foxx, like we've never seen him before, plays Max, a cab driver fed up with his job, who nevertheless takes pride in doing it well. Impressed by Max's skills, Vince hires him for the night. Accidentally, during Vince's first of five kills, Max realizes he hasn't actually been hired to help a real estate agent meet his contacts.

Plot-wise, that's about it. There's really no way I could possibly ruin any surprises for you, because there aren't any. Max drives Vince around for awhile; Vince does his thing; eventually Max saves the day. All of this was revealed in the previews, and the first fifteen minutes of the movie. Originality ruined by typical Hollywood formula. Predictability is not, by far, the only problem with the screenplay, though, written by rookie Stuart Beattie.

There are so many moments in *Collateral* that cross far beyond the borders of plausibility that I lost count. Actually, I don't keep count, but if I did, I would've lost it. Usually, in an action movie, you have to suspend your disbelief when the hero of the story performs athletic feats of superhuman ability while putting the smack down on the bad guys. No such superhuman feats exist in *Collateral*; good. Instead, we're asked to overlook a few MAJOR coincidences, and a whole lot of behaviors that no real person would ever think of performing.

Intermittently, the movie tries to be a "smart" crime-drama, letting us follow the investigation of the detective on the case. Yippee. Too bad all of the clues that we're supposed to follow have already been revealed, because we've just seen what actually went down. Kinda kills the suspense.

The saving grace of *Collateral* is the fact that Michael Mann is one heck of a director (*Ali, The Insider, Heat, Last of the Mohicans*). From the beginning of the movie, it's clear that *Collateral* isn't going to be your average shoot-'em-up. And, while Beatty might've done a terrible job writing the story, as far as plotline is concerned, he deserves some accolades for the dialogue and character development.

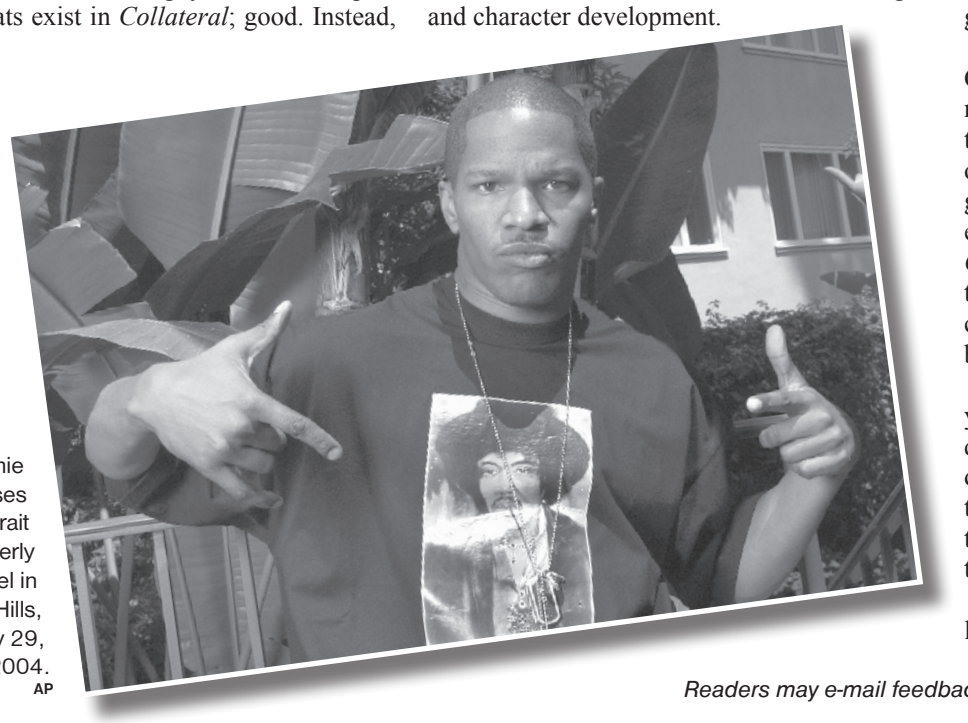
Far from what you'd expect from an action movie, the driving force behind *Collateral* is the uneasy tension that exists between Max and Vince. Both characters are well developed and easy to empathize with (yeah, even the hitman). This is partly due to Beatty's writing, but mostly to Mann's direction. Bucking the trend that most of his contemporaries keep to, Mann wisely chooses to use a lot of close-ups, and particularly long shots that linger on after they're already over (for a better example of how this technique is used effectively, watch Mann's *Heat*).

One of the best is the opening scene, in which Max meets his obligatory love interest, played by Jada Pinkett Smith. There are many more good scenes, yet, between Cruise and Foxx, especially one in which Vince teaches Max to grab his sack when need be.

In a sense, this role is a bit of a departure for Cruise, because he's the "bad guy." In reality, it's not much of a departure, at all, because he plays it the same way he's played every other role he's had over the last decade—which is actually pretty darn good. Foxx, on the other hand, will overwhelm you, especially if you used to watch him on *In Living Color*. Is it wrong that I kept waiting for him to say that he "likes breastissisis"? Look out for things to come from Foxx—he's got a talent, and appears to be breaking through the glass ceiling.

Don't let the first half of this review convince you to stay away from *Collateral*. It's got high-quality acting, brilliant direction, and a couple of decent action sequences. Do you really need more than that for your seven bucks? As long as you can turn a blind eye to the numerous problems with the plot, you should get some fun out of it.

Collateral is currently being shown at the Hollywood Theatres in San Jose, Saipan. Rated R.



Actor Jamie Foxx poses for a portrait at the Beverly Hills Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif., July 29, 2004. AP

Readers may e-mail feedback to joewatchesmovies@yahoo.com.

New chain offers dinner and a movie

By NATALIE GOTT
AP WRITER

AUSTIN (AP)—A fledgling theater chain with national aspirations is giving "dinner and a movie" a whole new meaning.

Austin-based Alamo Drafthouse Cinemas Ltd. is a movie house and restaurant under one roof. Customers can order beer, wine, burgers, sandwiches and pizza (with names such as "Porky's" pepperoni and "Poultrygeist" chicken pesto) at their seats as they watch new releases, independent or older films.

The chain, which has three Austin locations and one in Houston, also has special promotions like showing a kung fu movie and offering a full Asian menu, or serving spaghetti with "spaghetti westerns."

The company hopes to eventually grow to 200 U.S. franchises. It's an ambitious project for a small chain founded in 1996 with one screen that showed second-run films and hosted to eccentric events—like a showing of "Jaws" at a lake where moviegoers watched from inner tubes while underwater swimmers pinched their legs.

"They love cinema more than just about any theater that exists in the country," said Harry Knowles, creator of the "Ain't It Cool News" film Web site, who has used the Drafthouse to host events. "They have an independent spirit and an outside-the-norm sensibility that is quirky enough to fit with my own."

One of the most popular events is Mr. Sinus Theater - three comedians sitting at the front of the theater with microphones, making quips and heckling movies such as "Dirty Dancing," "Pretty in Pink" and "Karate Kid."

Director Quentin Tarantino has hosted film festivals at the original downtown Austin location, and the Drafthouse showed a premiere of his "Kill Bill—Vol. 1." Last December, Mel Gibson attended a screening of an unedited cut of "The Passion of The Christ" that Knowles hosted as part of his "Butt-Numb-A-Thon" film festival.

A side project of the Drafthouse is a traveling giant inflatable movie screen. The Rolling Roadshow, as it is known, aired "Caddyshack" on a golf course, "Deliverance" along the Guadalupe River and "Goonies" at Longhorn Caverns. It recently was used to show Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 9-11 in Crawford, near President Bush's Texas ranch.

The original Drafthouse owners, Tim and Karrie League, sold the name and all franchise rights to a couple of Austin businessmen who want to expand the franchise. The Leagues will keep ownership of the Rolling Roadshow, Drafthouse president John Martin said.

Franchises will be based on a prototype Alamo Drafthouse theater in Austin that shows new releases, some with a twist, as well as offbeat viewings. One recent example: Moviegoers who saw "Garfield" this summer were treated to the orange cat's favorite food, lasagna. A giant scratching post was set up in the lobby and the theater hosted a fat cat contest.

Drafthouse CEO Terrell Braley said most people who see movies go out to eat before the show, and the chain gives customers a place to do both.

"Rather than two irritations, two looking for seats, two bad services, you have one enjoyable, wonderful experience without irritation," Braley said.

Michael Rivera, 29, brought his father to "Caddyshack" on the golf course. He said he would not see a new release at the Drafthouse because the waiters were distracting, even though they sort of slouch to stay out of the way.

"But for something like a cult classic, or something I missed the first time, I'll definitely show up there," he said from a lawn chair on the back side of the driving range. "Or, for things like this, which is awesome."

Paris and Nicky Hilton's home burglarized



AP

Celebrities Paris Hilton, right, and Nicky Hilton arrive at the MTV Movie Awards at Sony Pictures Studio in Culver City, Calif., in this June 5, 2004 file photo.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Police confirmed Friday they were investigating a burglary at the Hollywood Hills home of Paris and Nicky Hilton.

Someone broke into the house Wednesday night, but detectives haven't identified a suspect, Officer Esther Reyes said. She wouldn't comment on what was stolen, citing the ongoing investigation.

Us Weekly magazine quoted an unnamed Hilton family member, who said the burglar took off with hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, jewelry and personal items.

Another unnamed source told the magazine that a laptop computer, several designer purses, video tapes and photographs of Paris Hilton, star of the Fox reality show "The Simple Life 2," with ex-boyfriend Nick Carter were also taken.

Paris Hilton's publicist, Gina Hoffman, confirmed the burglary but had no further comment.

Actress Eartha Kitt injured in car crash

WESTPORT, Conn. (AP)—Actress and singer Eartha Kitt, the original Catwoman on the "Batman" television show, suffered minor injuries when the vehicle she was driving collided with another car and flipped over, police said.

Kitt, 77, of Weston, was treated at Norwalk Hospital and released, hospital officials said.

The accident occurred at about 9:30 a.m. Thursday at Compo and Post Roads, said Sgt. Jerry Shannon. Kitt's Land Rover was crossing Post Road when it collided with a car, causing her car to roll over onto its roof, police said.

Kitt's two poodles were in the car but escaped injury.

The cause of the crash was under investigation.

Tony Danza to host talk show

NEW YORK (AP)—Who's the boss? Ask Ereka Vetrini and she'll say Tony Danza.

Vetrini, the eighth person fired during the first season of NBC's hit reality show "The Apprentice," has been hired as Danza's announcer and sidekick for his new talk show, which will premiere next month.

She'll discuss news and trends with Danza and cover red-carpet events including premieres and awards shows for "The Tony Danza Show," executive producer John Redmann announced Thursday.

"I couldn't be more thrilled about the opportunity to work with one of the most popular television personalities of all time," Vetrini, 28, said in a statement. "I'll be able to learn everything there is to know about television from a man whose career has stood the test of time."

Danza, 53, starred in the '70s comedy "Taxi" and the '80s sitcom "Who's the Boss?"

Vetrini, who graduated from Boston College, was dubbed "emotional" by Donald Trump before being eliminated from "The Apprentice." Most recently, she worked as a global promotional marketing manager for Clinique cosmetics.

"She may not have been hired by Donald Trump—but we've found the best person for the job," Redmann said.

"The Tony Danza Show" will premiere live on Sept. 13.

Alice Cooper's snake eats too much

HADDAM, Conn. (AP)—Alice the albino python had a little too much to eat for dinner.

Just hours before its owner, rocker Alice Cooper, was to take the stage at a theater in Wallingford last weekend, the 8-foot-long snake ate a live rat and then swallowed a 12-by-14 inch heating pad, wires and all, that had been left in its cage by mistake.

Before Saturday night's show, Cooper's roadies saw the snake's unusually large bulge and called at-risk snake helper Alison Sloan, who directed Alice to Higganum veterinarian Richard Jacobs.

"It was absolutely an emergency," Sloan told The Hartford Courant Thursday, noting the wires could have ruptured Alice's intestines or other organs with fatal results.

After sedating the python, Jacobs said he cut a 5-inch incision along a row of scales and maneuvered the heating pad out.

"That's an outrageous X-ray," Jacobs said Thursday, looking at the pre-op picture that showed the wires and contacts from the heating pad - plus a rodent. "It's probably the most astonishing X-ray I've taken in my career."



AP

Rock star Alice Cooper poses for a photo after being honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, on Dec. 2, 2003, in Los Angeles.

Sloan, director and owner of Ashleigh's Rain Forest in Essex, allowed Cooper to borrow a yellow anaconda for Saturday's show to replace the python, which undulates onstage with Cooper during his performances.

Alice the snake was resting comfortably at Jacobs' office Thursday.

Cooper was unavailable for comment.

Bill Clinton to appear on 'Daily Show'

NEW YORK (AP)—Bill Clinton has been all over television promoting his new book. But one show he won't be visiting is "Saturday Night Live."

The former president has turned down an invitation to be guest host of the NBC sketch-comedy series next season, spokesman Marc Liepis confirmed Friday. No reason was given for Clinton rejecting the offer, first reported by TV Guide Online.

But far from going into retreat, Clinton will sit down with Jon Stewart on Comedy Central's "Daily Show" Monday at 11 p.m. EDT, presumably to say more about his best-selling memoir, "My Life," as well as global affairs and the presidential race.

This appearance comes on the heels of Clinton's guest shot on CBS' "Late Show" Tuesday, when he brought a copy of his book as a birthday gift for host David Letterman's 9-month-old son. Meanwhile, Clinton gave Letterman a rare ratings win over NBC's "Tonight Show," delivering the biggest audience for "Late Show" since last March, when Janet Jackson drew a crowd for her first post-Super Bowl interview.

Fueled by Clinton's ongoing publicity blitz, his book has sold more than 1.5 million copies since its June 22 release.

Loss of dog is high price for man's bitter lesson

By AVIGAIL VAN BUREN



DEAR ABBY: I found my dog, "Belle," last year at the pound. We bonded instantly and I knew I had to take her. She was sweet, funny and fearless.

I remembered the truck commercials on TV where the message was dogs love trucks. Belle was no exception. The day I bought my used pickup, she hopped into the bed and was ready to go. It seemed that half the vehicles I saw growing up were old pickups with dogs—always unrestrained.

At first, there were short trips to the store or on a back road. But after a month, we got more adventurous. Sometimes Belle would get excited and lean over and snap at passing cars. That should have warned me, but at the time I thought it was funny. It never occurred to me to be concerned. Not until she fell out.

I watched in the mirror as she tumbled to the road. Belle survived the fall and started to get up, but before she could get out of the way, an oncoming car hit her.

It was stupid, awful and completely unexpected. And it could have been prevented. A simple harness, or better yet, keeping my beautiful Belle in the cab would have saved her life.

Now, because of a stupid, macho image I had of a man, his dog and his truck, I have lost a beloved friend. Please, Abby, warn your readers that if they have a pet they care about, not to allow it to ride unrestrained in a truck bed.

GRIEVING
IN LEXINGTON, KY.

DEAR GRIEVING: Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your beloved pet. I'm printing your reminder for the benefit of other pet owners, but I would like to extend it. I frequently see young children standing on the seats of vehicles driven by their mothers, while Mom chats away on her cell phone. I have also seen pets and people riding unrestrained in the back of open trucks. It takes only a moment for an accident to happen. These kinds of accidents can be life-altering or fatal. So please, folks, use a little restraint—the kind that buckles.

□ □ □ □ □

DEAR ABBY: I recently relocated to live near my son, "Gary," and his girlfriend, "Gina." Gary supports Gina and her three children, and talks constantly about marrying her and adopting the kids. Gary believes that Gina will marry him one day, but she has confided to me that once she finishes college and starts her career, she does not see herself married to my son.

I'm torn between telling Gary the truth and hurting him (not to mention damaging our relationship), or letting him find out in two years that he has been seriously used.

TORN MOM
IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR TORN: Talk to Gina and urge her to level with your son. If she refuses, then you must do it. If he finds out in two years that you knew all along that he was being used and said nothing, it will be more damaging to your relationship than if you tell him the truth now. He won't like hearing it, but you must tell him what Gina told you. If he were my son, I would.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $5 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)




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Le TOUR de FRANCE

Cardinals acquire Walker, edge Mets 6-4

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Albert Pujols' third hit snapped a seventh-inning tie, and Matt Morris followed another shaky outing with a strong performance Friday to help the St. Louis Cardinals beat the New York Mets 6-4 after acquiring star outfielder Larry Walker.

"He's a great player," Pujols said of Walker. "We just got better."

The Cardinals won for the 14th time in 18 games on a night in which they improved the NL's best offense by adding Walker in a trade with Colorado for Class-A closer Jason Burch and two players to be named.

Walker fills the only void in the lineup for a team that led the NL with a .280 average and was second with 144 homers, helping St. Louis to a major league-best 70-38 record. The Cardinals have used a variety of players in left field, and now right fielder Reggie Sanders probably will move to left to make room for Walker.

Morris (12-7) worked seven innings, allowing two runs on five hits with three strikeouts and two walks.

"He always responds," manager Tony La Russa said. "He's had a hiccup or two this year but we have great confidence in Matt."

Mike Cameron and Richard Hidalgo hit consecutive solo homers off Kiko Calero in the ninth, but Jason Isringhausen got two outs for his 29th save in 34 chances. Cliff Floyd also homered for the Mets.

Tom Glavine (8-10) allowed four runs, three earned, and eight hits in 7 1-3 innings.

Astros 4, Expos 0

In Houston, Roy Oswalt threw a five-hit shutout to beat Montreal on a night Houston lost shortstop Adam Everett for at least four weeks with a broken left wrist.

Everett was hit by a pitch from Claudio Vargas in the fourth inning and broke the ulnar bone in his left wrist. It's unclear whether he will need surgery.

Oswalt (12-8) struck out eight and walked one in his second shutout of the season, the third of his career. Oswalt, who threw 133 pitches, has won four straight decisions overall.

Jeff Bagwell and Jeff Kent drove in two runs each for Houston.

Montreal was shut out for the 15th time this season—no other team has been blanked more than nine times.

Marlins 7, Brewers 6

In Miami, Paul Lo Duca hit a two-run single off Dan Kolb with none out in the ninth inning as Florida beat an error-plagued Milwaukee.

Milwaukee allowed five unearned runs, including two each on errors by shortstop Craig Counsell and third baseman Wes Helms.

Kolb (0-2) fueled the comeback with a throwing error on Juan Pierre's bunt, putting runners at second and third. It was Kolb's second blown save in 32 chances this season. He had converted 17 consecutive chances.

Rockies 8, Reds 5

In Denver, Todd Helton and Preston Wilson drove in two runs each to help Shawn Estes beat Cincinnati and win his 12th game on the night Colorado traded five-time All-Star Larry Walker.

Walker, the 1997 National League Most Valuable Player, was traded to St. Louis during the game for minor league pitcher Jason Burch and two players to be named. He had a no-trade clause but waived it to approve the deal, in which Colorado is paying St. Louis $7.5 million.

Estes (12-4) allowed five runs and eight hits in 6 1-3 innings. Shawn Chacon worked the ninth for his 26th save in 34 chances.

Padres 13, Pirates 1

In San Diego, Mark Loretta homered twice and had a career-high five RBIs to help San Diego trounce Pittsburgh and stop a four-game losing streak.

Loretta hit a solo homer in the first inning, capped a four-run second inning with an RBI double, had a sacrifice fly in a six-run sixth and hit a two-run homer off Salomon Torres in the eighth for his first career two-homer game.

Jake Peavy (8-3) won his third straight decision, allowing four hits and an unearned run in seven innings while striking out nine. He has allowed two earned runs or fewer in 15 of 16 starts.

Braves 4, Diamondbacks 2

In Phoenix, Jaret Wright extended his career-best winning streak to eight games and Adam LaRoche hit a tie-breaking two-run homer in the sixth inning to lift Atlanta over Arizona.

Wright (10-5) hit his first career home run in 53 at-bats, and Rafael Furcal also had a solo shot for the Braves, who have won 12 of 14 games. Wright gave up two runs, seven hits and four walks in 6 1-3 innings.

Chris Reitsma got three outs for his first save in six chances.

Brandon Webb (4-13) allowed four runs, eight hits and four walks in 6 1-3 innings.?

Giants 6, Cubs 2

In San Francisco, Jason Schmidt struck out 11 batters in his NL-leading 14th win, and Michael Tucker and J.T. Snow hit home runs as San Francisco downed Chicago.

One night before Chicago's Greg Maddux goes for his 300th win, Schmidt (14-4) earned his 100th career victory.

The Cubs' four-game winning streak was snapped, and their lead in the NL wild-card race shrank to one game over San Diego and two games over the Giants.

Nomar Garciaparra got three hits and scored a run, as Schmidt struggled through seven innings, allowing nine hits and three walks. Schmidt survived with timely strikeouts and a few lucky breaks, eventually stranding 10 runners—seven in scoring position.

Phillies 9, Dodgers 5, 11 innings

In Los Angeles, Cesar Izturis' throwing error led to four unearned runs in the 11th inning, including a go-ahead, two-run single by Jim Thome against All-Star reliever Eric Gagne as Philadelphia beat Los Angeles.

Jimmy Rollins led off the game with a home run, one of four hit by Philadelphia in the first two innings against Kazuhisa Ishii. Bobby Abreu, Marlon Byrd and Placido Polanco also connected for the Phillies.

Tim Worrell was charged with his fifth blown save in 18 attempts when Jayson Werth drove a 1-2 pitch over the right-field fence to tie it at 5 in the ninth. It was his 10th home run and second of the game.

Atheletics 3, Twins 1

In Minnesota, Oakland closer Octavio Dotel gave up a tying home run in the ninth inning. This time, Dotel settled down and gave the A's a chance to win.

After Shannon Stewart homered off Dotel leading off the ninth, Eric Chavez hit a go-ahead double in the 11th to give Oakland a 3-1 victory in Minnesota on Friday night.

Dotel (2-1) gave up a tying homer in the ninth to Yankees slugger Gary Sheffield on Wednesday and was pulled after the inning. New York went on to win in 11 innings.

Oakland moved into first place in the AL West, a half-game ahead of Texas. The Twins lost for just the fourth time in 17 games, but maintained a six-game lead over Chicago and Cleveland in the AL Central.

Yankees 11, Blue Jays 4

In New York, Hideki Matsui homered twice and drove in a career-high six runs in the first three innings for the Yankees.

Javier Vazquez (13-6) allowed three runs in the first inning but gave up only two doubles and a single the rest of the way, retiring 11 straight batters at one point.

Toronto starter Sean Douglass (0-2) allowed seven hits and seven runs in 2 1-3 innings. He was ejected for hitting John Flaherty in the knee with a pitch three batters after Matsui's second shot.

Devil Rays 2, Mariners 1, 10 innings

In St. Petersburg, Fla., Carl Crawford scored the winning run when Seattle shortstop Jose Lopez was charged with obstruction in the 10th inning.

Crawford was on third with the bases loaded and one out when Tino Martinez hit a fly to left field off Clint Nageotte (1-6). On the play, Lopez moved toward third and took a position between Crawford and left fielder Raul Ibanez.

Third base umpire Paul Emmel ruled Lopez obstructed Crawford's view of the catch and awarded Crawford home. Lopez was charged with an error.

Tigers 4, Red Sox 3

In Detroit, Dmitri Young had three hits and scored twice to help the Tigers end a four-game losing streak.

Young doubled to lead off the sixth inning, and scored the go-ahead run when Carlos Guillen singled.

Boston dropped a season-high 10 1/2 games behind first-place New York in the AL East. The largest deficit the Red Sox have overcome to win the division is 10 games, in 1988.

Angels 3, Royals 0

In Kansas City, Mo., Kelvim Escobar struck out nine in seven innings, and Robb Quinlan hit a two-run homer for Anaheim.

Escobar (6-8) allowed seven hits and walked one in the Angels' eighth shutout of the season. Francisco Rodriguez struck out the side in the eighth, and Troy Percival finished with a perfect ninth for his 19th save.

Darrell May (8-12) gave up six hits in seven innings for the Royals.

Indians 3, White Sox 2

In Chicago, Coco Crisp accounted for all of Cleveland's runs with a three-run homer in the second inning.

C.C. Sabathia (8-6) shut out the White Sox for five innings before Chicago pushed across an unearned run in the sixth and Juan Uribe homered in the seventh. Sabathia struck out eight in seven innings. Bob Wickman worked the ninth for his third save.

Mark Buehrle (10-5) lasted 6 2-3 innings, allowing nine hits and three runs.

Pinch-runner Willie Harris was thrown out at the plate by second baseman Ronnie Belliard to end the game.

Orioles 9, Rangers 1

In Baltimore, Miguel Tejada, Javy Lopez and Larry Bigbie homered to help the Orioles win their fourth straight.

Erik Bedard (5-6) allowed one run on five hits in 6 1-3 innings.

Tejada drove in two runs to increase his league-leading RBI total to 99.

The loss ended a three-game winning streak for the Rangers, who stranded 10 runners and tied a season high with three errors.

Nick Regilio (0-3), making his third major league start, got only four outs for Texas.

Vick says no need to fuss about injuries

Michael Vick doesn't understand all the fuss over his sore right hamstring. Neither does his new coach, Jim Mora.

But they understand the concern Atlanta fans have about their star quarterback, who pulled the muscle on Thursday when the Falcons scrimmaged the Titans in Nashville, Tenn.

"It makes it seem like I'm just getting dinged up and injuries are starting to come around a lot. I'll be fine, man," Vick said Friday. "It's just small injuries there, just nagging injuries, things that happen in training camp. It's nothing severe, so I don't know why it's being made a big issue of it."

Mora agreed.

"I don't want it to be a situation where every time he gets dinged everyone thinks the sky is falling because it's not," he said. "He's a tough kid. He had an unfortunate injury last year. That doesn't mean he's injury prone. He's not injury prone. He's a big healthy strong man," Mora said.

Falcons fans can be forgiven for wincing every time Vick calls for a trainer. After breaking his right leg last Aug. 16, he didn't play again until Nov. 30. By then, a season that started with so much promise had disintegrated. Vick's return helped salvage two more victories for a 5-11 record.

The way Vick grimaced and grabbed at the back of his right leg Thursday made it appear that the quarterback as dangerous with his legs as with his arm had seriously hurt himself. Vick said he was caught off-guard.

Mora aid Friday he should have realized the intense interest.

"I can appreciate the people in Atlanta's concerned for him. He's an important part of our team and important part of our community, and we're all concerned when he goes down," Mora said.

Vick was dressed in pads Friday morning, but he didn't take part in any drills. He worked on dropping back some before standing around wearing his helmet and watching rookie Matt Schaub take a bigger share of the work in a joint practice with the Tennessee Titans.

These last few days also have helped Mora learn how to handle a player whose every pain is news for the country.

"That's better than the alternative of having no superstar. We'll take that anytime," he said.

Tight end Alge Crumpler will sit out Saturday's scrimmage with the Tennessee Titans after an MRI test Friday on his aching left knee revealed a bruise.

"It was really precautionary to have that done," Mora said. "He hyperextended his knee. When he came down, he caught just a little bit of the bone, but it's nothing serious at all." ***(AP)***



Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick passes during an afternoon combined practice with the Tennessee Titans at the Titans' training facility in Nashville, Tenn., Friday, Aug. 6, 2004.

AP

US dominates Serbia-Montenegro, 78-60

By CHRIS SHERIDAN
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

BELGRADE, Serbia-Montenegro (AP)—The U.S. Olympic men's basketball team did Larry Brown proud. Following his mantra of "playing the right way," they dominated the defending world champions with defense in an impressive 78-60 exhibition victory over Serbia-Montenegro on Friday night.

The Americans took a partisan crowd out of the game by holding Serbia-Montenegro to just nine points in the second quarter, and their defense never relented. They showed none of the faults that hampered them in earlier games against Italy and Germany while shutting down an opponent that appeared equal parts overconfident and incompetent.

Tim Duncan led the U.S. team with 16 points, LeBron James added 11 and the entire team played with a level of determination that should go a long way toward re-establishing them as one of the favorites for the gold medal in Athens.

When the evening began, they weren't even picked to win the game. Local betting parlors listed the Serbian team as a four-point favorite.

"We are the team that everyone wants to play their best basketball against," Lamar Odom said. "We're playing for a lot, and it means a lot to us."

The U.S. team went 14-for-14 from the free throw line and 30-of-60 from the field, while holding the Serbian team to 35 percent shooting overall and 1-for-14 accuracy from 3-point range.



AP

Team USA's Tim Duncan, right, drives to the basket as Nenad Krstic, left, of Serbia and Montenegro, defends during their exhibition game, in Belgrade, Friday, Aug. 6, 2004.

A 14-0 run to begin the second quarter put the Americans in control, and their defense the rest of the way kept the home team from making any kind of extended rally.

A crowd of about 18,000 showed their respect by standing and applauding the Americans as the game ended.

"We have a young team and are still learning about each other and hopefully that will improve as each of these games goes on," Brown said. "The experience we had playing here was real important for us."

Rather than playing a zone as Italy and Germany did almost exclusively in the Americans' earlier exhibition games, the Serbian team went with a man-to-man scheme.

The U.S. team also played man-to-man defense, and two of the game's best one-on-one moves were made by Dejan Bodiroga - often called the best player in Europe - against Carmelo Anthony.

The Americans bounced back after missing their first five shots and led 20-17 after one quarter.

The game got away from the Serbs early in the second quarter, and the big run brought the American players and coaches off the bench in jubilation. One of the most impressive stretches was a blocked shot by Shawn Marion that led to a breakaway, Marion sprinting downcourt to finish it with a dunk off a pass from Stephon Marbury.

It was 42-26 at halftime, and the Serbs' frustration became more and more evident in the third quarter.

Vladimir Radmanovic, who played poorly throughout, spiked a bottle of water to the floor after being yanked from the game, showering the court with water.

Odom was the American team's best player in the final quarter, stopping the Serbian team's momentum with clutch shots each time they tried to rally.

The home team's last possession ended with a steal by Allen Iverson, who stuck his tongue out and grinned after making the play.

Igor Rakocevic led Serbia-Montenegro with 18 points, and Bodiroga - who did not start due to a knee injury - added 14.

The U.S. team's next game will be against Turkey on Sunday night.

Lakers trade Payton, Fox to Celtics

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. (AP)—"Kobe's team" underwent still more changes Friday when the Los Angeles Lakers sent Gary Payton and Rick Fox to the Boston Celtics in a five-player deal.

The Lakers, putting perhaps the final touches on an extensive overhaul, got Chuck Atkins, Marcus Banks and Chris Mihm from Boston.

"We got a true backup center (Mihm) who can probably play a little bit of power forward, and we got much younger in the backcourt," Lakers general manager Mitch Kupchak said.

The Celtics also received a conditional first-round draft pick and cash in the deal and sent a second-round pick to the Western Conference champions.

"As you know, we have made some dramatic changes," Kupchak said in understatement.

Three days after the Lakers lost to the underdog Pistons in the NBA Finals, the shakeup began. Coach Phil Jackson was let go and Shaquille O'Neal demanded a trade.

Rudy Tomjanovich was hired as coach, O'Neal was dealt to Miami for Lamar Odom, Brian Grant and Caron Butler; Derek Fisher left for Golden State; and free agent Bryant signed a seven-year, $136.4 million contract.

Later, Los Angeles signed free agent Vlade Divac, who was the Lakers' center in the early 1990s.

"We're hopeful, with the changes and the younger players, that we put ourselves in the position where we don't have to experience four or five years of mediocrity," Kupchak said.

"Hopefully, we'll be in a position to make the playoffs right away, advance in the playoffs, and at the same time have a good mix of young players who may be with us the next 10 years."

Payton and Karl Malone took large pay cuts to join the Lakers as free agents last summer, each All-Star hoping to win his first championship.

Malone, recovering from knee surgery, has not said whether he will return to the team.

Fox played with the Lakers for seven years, spending six previous seasons with the Celtics.

Kupchak said he had spoken with Payton's agent earlier Friday, and had a phone conversation with Fox.

"As you would expect, they (the players) were both disappointed to be in a position where they have to move on," Kupchak said. `This is the business part of what we do.

"It was an opportunity to pick up three players, all of whom are younger than the other two players in the deal."

Kupchak said the Lakers hadn't set out to trade Payton.

"We did not try to move Gary Payton. This was an opportunity that was brought to us. Had we been uncomfortable with Gary, we would not have protected him in the expansion draft," the GM said.

Despite struggling through his first year with Los Angeles, the 36-year-old Payton exercised a $5.4 million option to return for another season.

A nine-time All-Star who averaged 18.3 points over his first 13 seasons, Payton averaged 14.6 points—his lowest since the 1992-93 season—and a career-low 4.2 assists in the regular season last year. He averaged 7.8 points and 5.3 assists in the playoffs.

Payton was selected to the NBA's all-defensive team eight times and was voted the defensive player of the year in 1996. He is fifth on the league's career list with 2,243 steals and sixth with 8,039 assists; he needs 44 points to become the 29th player in NBA history to score 20,000 points.

Payton won Olympic gold medals in 1996 and 2000. He has missed just six games in his 15-year career.

The 35-year-old Fox, who won three NBA championship rings with the Lakers, has career averages of 9.6 points, 3.8 rebounds and 2.8 assists.

The 7-foot Mihm, 25, averaged 6.3 points and 5.4 rebounds last year for Boston and the Cleveland Cavaliers. Atkins, 29, acquired from the Pistons midway through last season, averaged 8.4 points and 3.5 assists last year.

Banks, 22, a first-round draft pick out of UNLV in 2003, started two games for the Celtics as a rookie.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	69	39	.639	-
Boston	58	49	.542	10 1/2
Tampa Bay	52	57	.477	17 1/2
Baltimore	50	57	.467	18 1/2
Toronto	47	62	.431	22 1/2

Central Division

Minnesota	61	47	.565	-
Cleveland	56	54	.509	6
Chicago	54	52	.509	6
Detroit	51	58	.468	10 1/2
Kansas City	39	68	.364	21 1/2

West Division

Oakland	61	47	.565	-
Texas	60	47	.561	1/2
Anaheim	59	50	.541	2 1/2
Seattle	40	69	.367	21 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Detroit 4, Boston 3
N.Y. Yankees 11, Toronto 4
Tampa Bay 2, Seattle 1, 10 innings
Baltimore 9, Texas 1
Cleveland 3, Chicago White Sox 2
Oakland 3, Minnesota 1, 11 innings
Anaheim 3, Kansas City 0?

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	61	47	.565	-
Philadelphia	56	52	.519	5
Florida	54	54	.500	7
New York	52	56	.481	9
Montreal	42	66	.389	19

Central Division

St. Louis	70	38	.648	-
Chicago	60	49	.550	10 1/2
Houston	55	54	.505	15 1/2
Cincinnati	53	56	.486	17 1/2
Milwaukee	51	57	.472	19
Pittsburgh	49	58	.458	20 1/2

West Division

Los Angeles	64	43	.598	-
San Diego	59	50	.541	6
San Francisco	59	52	.532	7
Colorado	48	61	.440	17
Arizona	35	76	.315	31

Yesterday's Games

Florida 7, Milwaukee 6
Houston 4, Montreal 0
St. Louis 6, N.Y. Mets 4
Colorado 8, Cincinnati 5
Atlanta 4, Arizona 2
San Diego 13, Pittsburgh 1
San Francisco 6, Chicago Cubs 2
Phillies 9, Dodgers 5, 11 innings

SPORTS TRANSACTIONS

MLB

BOSTON RED SOX-Acquired LHP Mike Myers from Seattle for a player to be named or cash.
CHICAGO WHITE SOX-Placed LHP Scott Schoeneweis on the 15-day DL, retoactive to Aug. 5.
MINNESOTA TWINS-Optioned SS Jason Bartlett to Rochester of the IL. Purchased the contract of INF Augie Ojeda from Rochester of the IL. Transferred INF Nick Punto from the 15- to the 60-day DL.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS-Traded 1B-DH Josh Phelps to Cleveland for 1B-OF Eric Crozier.
MILWAUKEE BREWERS-Recalled RHP Wes Obermueller from Indianapolis of the IL. Designated RHP Matt Kinney for assignment.
NEW YORK METS-Announced OF Shane Spencer has cleared waivers and was given his outright release.
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES-Placed RHP Kevin Millwood on the 15-day DL. Recalled RHP Geoff Geary from Scranton Wilkes-Barre of the IL.
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS-Acquired OF Larry Walker from Colorado for RHP Jason Burch and two players to be named.

NBA

LOS ANGELES LAKERS-Traded G Gary Payton, F Rick Fox, a conditional first-round draft pick and cash to the Boston Celtics for G Chucky Atkins, G Marcus Banks and F-C Chris Mihm. Signed G Tony Bobbitt.
MIAMI HEAT-Signed G Damon Jones.
NEW JERSEY NETS-Signed F Eric Williams to a three-year contract.

NFL

CINCINNATI BENGALS-Waived WR Marlus Mays.
GREEN BAY PACKERS-Re-signed OT-G Joe Hayes. Waived DE Eric Powell.
MINNESOTA VIKINGS-Released WR Kenny Clark and QB Matt Kegel. Signed CB Reggie Austin and WR Tony Johnson.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS-Released QB Kurt Kittner, OT James Williams and DT DeVonte Peterson.
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS-Signed WR Devery Henderson to a four-year contract.
NEW YORK JETS-Signed G-C Pete Kendall.

COLLEGE

ANDERSON, S.C.-Named Chris Nall assistant baseball coach.
BLOOMFIELD-Named Patrick Dietz women's volleyball coach.
BUCKNELL-Named Annie Zinkavich women's graduate assistant field hockey coach.
NORTH DAKOTA-Named Dan Tannahill women's golf coach.
QUINCY-Named Chris Martin assistant baseball coach and Luke Strege men's assistant basketball coach.
SAMFORD-Named Shanna Cook women's assistant basketball coach.
STEPHEN F. AUSTIN-Announced the resignation of Rennie Bailey, men's assistant basketball coach.
UC IRVINE-Named Stephanie Shrieve associate athletic director-senior woman administrator.
VERMONT-Named Bruce Bosley athletic communications assistant.
WESTERN CONNECTICUT-Named Peter Schachter men's soccer coach.
WESTERN KENTUCKY-Extended the contract of Wood Selig, athletics.

The Week in Sports

Rain, rain go away



Richard Brostrom and Gary Ramsey, middle, with men's 3.0 second round opponents Reggie Reyes and Archie Monticello of Tinian in the 2nd Verizon Cup.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Verizon Cup men's 3.0 champions Father Ryan Jimenez and Beltau Toshi, left, with second place Noel Manalang and Babu Malayil before their finals match Thursday at the AMP tennis courts.

Photos and Text by MARK RABAGO and BRAD E. RUSZALA

Mother Nature, once again, lashed out her fury with heavy rain showers the past week, resulting in the postponement of several outdoor sport events.

Suffering setbacks were the National Track and Field Championships, originally set for last Saturday. It was postponed after the wet weather filled the track facility with puddles, however, unfolded yesterday.

Also suffering setbacks was the Saipan Tennis Association 2nd Verizon Cup at the American Memorial Park. On several occasions, the weather cleared for just enough time to stamp some results in the books. The duo of Lope Padilla and Nicolas Son won the men's 4.5 championship, beating Peter Loyola and Hector Guiterrez, while Father Ryan Jimenez and Beltau Toshi triumph over Babu Malayil and Noel Manalang in the men's 3.0.

Up-and-coming tennis players Kanani Ashraf and Audrey Motto also won the women's doubles 4.0 division last Monday over Ligaya Paculanang and Cleofe Santos in straight sets.

Indoor caging continued as usual and heated up as Capricciosa bagged the pennant title of the Inter-Restaurant Basketball League after drubbing a tuckered out and undermanned Jollibee squad 93-72.

In youth action, four teams remained perfect in the Saipan Rotary Club Summer Youth Basketball League, creating an exciting race for first place. Makos raised its record to 3-0 when it shot down a raw but promising 69ers II squad while darkhorse Garapan Rollers I nipped defending champion Verizon Ol'Aces. The San Antonio Sixers I then sealed their third win in as many games after recording a 124-37 king-size rout of Garapan Rollers III.

The fourth team with a perfect record thus far in the season, the 69ers (2-0), did not see action early this week.

In the second round of the 2004 UFO-San Miguel Cup also went into high gear Sunday with four games scheduled at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Visminda rolled to its second straight victory of the playoffs after bludgeoning a still winless MDX Amateur radio Club team, FASA-PABA-CNC Inc. overcame a fighting Laguna-GEC Pawnshop team, SMF-Seabridge dispatched a reeling Bicol-Sabungero squad, and Bartenders-Aliviera Sports Bar survived an upset-conscious MAFILWA-McDonald's.



MARK RABAGO

Last year's regular season MVP Pando Muleta of Vismidna goes up against Bobby Vargas of MDX.



Jay Costales of MDX Amateur Radio Club tries to scale a mountain when he goes up against Visminda-Country House's 6'3" center Ed Cosino.

MARK RABAGO



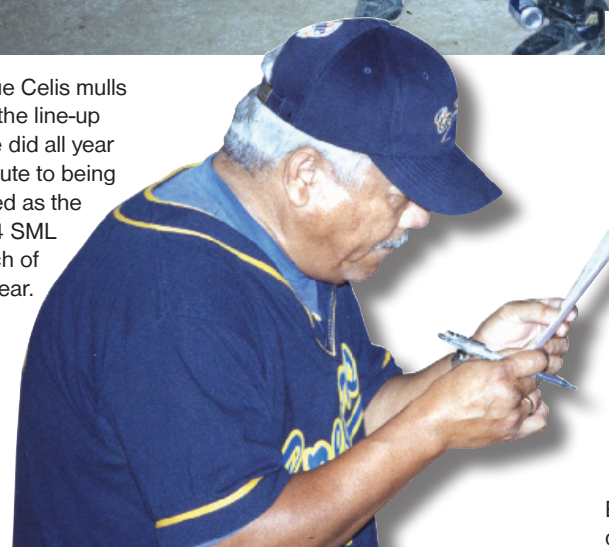
The Brewers listen to advise from their coach Roque Celis and manager Tony Rogolifoi after a regular season match up.

BRAD E. RUSZALA



Randy Arconado of Capricciosa tries a finger roll against Bryan Lontoc of Jollibee.

MARK RABAGO



Roque Celis mulls over the line-up as he did all year en route to being named as the 2004 SML Coach of the Year.

BRAD E. RUSZALA

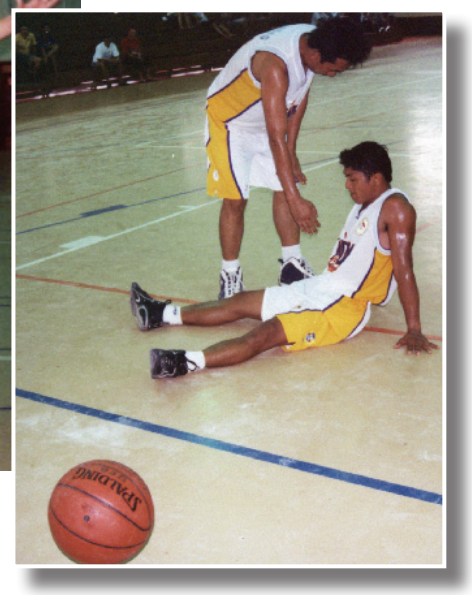


BRAD E. RUSZALA

Bobby Castro congratulates Roy Celis after he departed the mound in another Brewers victory.

MDX high-leaper Martin Moreno takes a break in the action.

MARK RABAGO



Cardinals acquire Walker, edge Mets 6-4

Albert Pujols' third hit snapped a seventh-inning tie, and Matt Morris followed another shaky outing with a strong performance Friday to help the St. Louis Cardinals beat the New York Mets 6-4 after acquiring star outfielder Larry Walker.
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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Rain, rain go away

Mother Nature, once again, lashed out her fury with heavy rain showers the past week, resulting in the postponement of several outdoor sport events.
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The Miller Lite Brewers:

A season of success

By BRAD E. RUSZALA
REPORTER

It has only been about a week since the Miller Lite Brewers completed a sweep of 2003 champion Northern Yankees, and now that a little time has passed, it is time to take a look back on their season of success.

The Brewers opened up their season with a game against the San Roque D-9ers back on March 5, and proved they were ready for the new season with a dominating 18-0 pummeling of the 9ers.

As the season progressed, it became obvious that the D-9ers would not be a good team for which to gauge a team's talent. The Brew crew found that out quickly the following week when they faced a Pirates team that was coming off of a victory over the defending champs.

The black and gold put a hurtin' on the Brewers on March 10, as the boys in blue suffered their first defeat, 12-8. The next week the crew looked even worse as they lost their second game in a row to the Yankees, 10-2.

After the first round of play the Brewers found themselves in third place with a record of 1-2, ahead only of the 0-3 D-9ers. The crew regained their confidence in their fourth game, as they matched up against the D-9ers.

Finally, the offense that was quiet since their first game returned to the tune of a 25-10 whomping of the San Roque squad. With confidence on their side once again, the Brewers roared into their April 2 match up with the Pirates and avenged the previous loss with a 14-10 triumph.

Riding the wave of confidence, the Brewers beat the Yankees 9-5 on April 16, and suddenly they had a three game winning that put them into a tie for first place with the pinstripers mid-way through the season.

They made it a four game streak when they added a second coat of shellac to the D-9ers in their last game of the month, 13-3. This was their last April game because of a rainout that spoiled their match up with the Pirates in April 30.

That burp in the schedule may have impacted the team, as they dropped their next decision to a resurgent Yankees team, 11-9. At the end of round three, much as it was throughout the season, it was Yankees, Brewers, Pirates, and D-9ers.

The Brewers invaded District 9 on May 12, and unleashed a wave of offense that was brash enough to make a sailor blush. The blue and gold scored 33 runs on the D-9ers and allowed just three before one of the fans threw in a towel to stop the match.

With a full tank of fuel, the Brewers took it to their rivals over the next two games as they beat the Pirates and Yankees 9-4 and 11-8, respectively. Those wins together with the rescheduled rainout game versus the Pirates created an opportunity for the Brewers to force a one game playoff with the Yankees for the pennant.



All that the Brewers had to do was beat the Pirates, a team that they had seemed to all but figure out during the rest of the season. It was not to be as the blue and gold was on the hurtin' end of the 7-5 stick.

They were still in a good position, finishing the season 8-4 behind the 9-3 Yankees, but they now would have to face the Pirates in a best-of-three playoff to advance to the finals.

Though the Pirates were energized going into the playoff round, it was difficult to tell as they dropped the opening game that had been put off by the foul weather, 13-3. Perhaps they were too amped up, as they committed errors in the second game as well.

The Brew crew looked well on their way to the finals when went into the final inning of the second game with a four run lead, but just managed to advance despite a two-out three-run homerun.

The finals were put off, delayed, pushed back, and almost forgotten about by the time that the Yankees saw action against the Brewers, an the rust was rather evident.

The Brewers silenced the Yankees' bats to stun the champs 2-0 in a Game 1 that was dominated by the pitchers. Game 2 was not the same type of baseball outing for either of the squads, but one could tell that the Yankees' were beginning to awaken despite losing 9-6 to go down 0-2 in the series.

What happened in Game 3 wasn't expected by anyone that was in attendance at Francisco M. Palacios field, including the stadium's namesake. The Brewers rocketed out to a huge lead only to edge out a one-run victory over the Yankees.

The Saipan Major League recognized the Brewers as the regular season pennant runner-up and the playoff champion for the 2004 season, as well a several of their players being named for individual awards.

The title of batting champion belongs to their third baseman Tony Celis, who compiled .560 batting average in 50 appearances at the plate, scored a league leading 23 times Celis, and being named by league officials the 2004 SML regular season's most valuable player.

Their star first baseman Tony Camacho led the league with 20 while slugger Bruce Norita of the blue and gold was tied for the most regular season homeruns.

The accolades didn't stop there for the Brewers' players as shortstop Jester Garcia was named as infielder of the year as well as the MVP of the playoffs. The defense was mentioned again when the rocket Roy Celis was named as the pitcher of the year, in part due to his league high 38 strikeouts.

The Celis family was once again recognized, as Roque Celis was tabbed coach of the year for the second time in three years, capping off their season of success.